

performed in the United States has been moved out of the country.

However, change has not lessened the absolute need for protection and representation for our nation's working men and women. And change has not lessened the resolve of the union movement to represent and protect America's workers.

As the labor movement continues to face the looming challenges, it is important to note that the union movement is on the right track. In 1998, the number of union members rose in more than half the states and union membership grew by more than 100,000 nationwide. In all, the number of union members in the nation rose from 16.1 to 16.2 million. As AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has said, "Our commitment and dedication to organizing, at all levels of the labor movement, is beginning to bear fruit—but we still have a long way to go. We need to stay focused and redouble our efforts."

THE SENIOR CITIZENS INCOME TAX RELIEF ACT

HON. MATT SALMON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Senior Citizens Income Tax Relief Act. This legislation would repeal the Clinton Social Security tax increase of 1993.

Millions of America's senior citizens depend on Social Security as a critical part of their retirement income. Having paid into the program throughout their working lives, retirees count on the government to meet its obligations under the Social Security contract. For many, the security provided by this supplemental pension plan is the difference between a happy and healthy retirement and one marked by uncertainty and apprehension, particularly for the vast majority of seniors on fixed incomes.

As part of his massive 1993 tax hike, President Clinton imposed a tax increase on senior citizens, subjecting to taxation up to 85 percent of the Social Security received by seniors with annual incomes of over \$34,000 and couples with over \$44,000 in annual income. This represents a 70 percent increase in the marginal tax rate for these seniors. Factor in the government's Social Security Earnings Limitation and a senior's marginal tax rate can reach 88 percent—twice the rate paid by millionaires.

An analysis of government-provided figures on the 1993 Social Security tax increase finds that, at the end of 1998, America's seniors have paid an extra \$25 billion because of this tax hike, including \$380 million from senior citizens in Arizona alone.

Older Americans are just as willing as the rest of the country to pay their fair share, but the President and other big spenders in Congress should not take that as a license to finance their big government agenda on the backs of Social Security beneficiaries. Our nation's seniors have worked too hard to have their golden years tarnished by the government renegeing on its promises. In an era of budget surpluses, surely we can find a way to provide America's seniors with relief from this burdensome tax.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO CLARIFY THAT NATURAL GAS GATHERING LINES ARE 7-YEAR PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF DEPRECIATION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced legislation, H.R. — to provide much needed certainty with respect to the proper depreciation classification of natural gas gathering lines. Natural gas gathering lines play an integral role in the production and processing of natural gas as they are used to carry gas from the wellhead to a gas processing unit or interconnection with a transmission pipeline. In many instances, the gathering network for a single gas field can consist of hundreds of miles and represents a substantial investment for natural gas processors.

The proper depreciation classification for specific assets is determined by reference to the asset guideline class that describes the property. Asset class 13.2 subject to a 7-year cost recovery period, clearly includes "assets used by petroleum and natural gas producers for drilling wells and production of petroleum and natural gas, including gathering pipelines and related production facilities." Not only are gathering lines specifically referenced in asset class 13.2, but gathering lines are integral to the extraction and production process. Nonetheless, it has come to my attention that some Internal Revenue Service auditors now seek to categorize natural gas gathering lines as assets subject to a 15-year cost recovery period under asset class 46.0, titled "Pipeline Transportation."

Over the past several years, I have corresponded and met with officials of the Department of Treasury seeking clarification on Internal Revenue Service policy and the issuance of guidance to taxpayers as to the proper treatment of these assets for depreciation purposes. These efforts have been to no avail. In the meantime, the continued controversy over this issue has imposed significant costs on the gas processing industry on audit and in litigation, and has resulted in a division of authority among the lower courts as to the proper depreciation of these assets. While it is not my intent to interfere with ongoing litigation, I do believe that legislation is needed to clarify the treatment of these assets under the Internal Revenue Code in order to provide certainty to the industry for tax planning purposes, and to avoid costly and protracted audits or litigation.

Accordingly, I have introduced legislation that would amend the Internal Revenue Code to specifically provide that natural gas gathering lines are subject to a 7-year cost recovery period. While I believe that this result should be obvious under existing law, this bill would eliminate any uncertainty surrounding the proper treatment of these assets. The bill also includes a proper definition of "natural gas gathering lines" to distinguish these assets from pipeline transportation for purposes of depreciation.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

DRUG USE AMONG OUR CHILDREN

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over the continuing increase in teenage drug abuse. Our nation's children are our future and they must be protected from the evils of illegal drugs.

Despite the Clinton Administration's promises, drug use among our children has increased in the last few years. The statistics speak for themselves. Between 1996 and 1997 illicit drug use by children grew from 9.6 percent to 11.4 percent. The Administration's response to this crisis has been appalling. The international interdiction programs have been reduced by nearly \$1 billion, while the present level of staff at the White House Office of Drug Control Policy is now 25, down from 146 employees.

As a father of seven and a grandfather of thirty four, I am very concerned with the ever lowering age of drug use in this country. I am proud to be working with other Member of Congress who are committed to the war on drugs. We have already passed legislation increasing the punishment for dealing in methamphetamines and we have increased spending to stop drugs from entering our borders. It should not stop there. For our children's sake we have to do more. We must increase the punishment for people who continue to deal in drugs, especially when children are concerned.

There is much more to do to stop the rise of drug use. Congress and the Administration must work together and reduce the influence of illegal drugs. I urge my colleagues to address this issue during the 106th Congress and to implore this administration to get tough on drug use among our children.

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF MR. AND MRS. JAMES McCLOSKEY

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 10, 1999

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a truly remarkable couple, Mr. and Mrs. James McCloskey. On January 9, 1999, they celebrated fifty years of marriage—their Golden Anniversary. Together, this exceptional couple has served as a role model for their family and community. I am greatly honored to pay tribute to them.

James J. McCloskey grew up in Philadelphia, PA and graduated from LaSalle University in 1951. For many years to follow, he worked diligently for the Delaware River Port Authority, managing contracts and insurance. He found time to actively participate in numerous organizations dedicated to serving his country and community. He belonged to the American Legion Post #88, Knights of Columbus, the Malvern Retreat League, the Irish Society, and the Association of Government Accountants. He was a past commander and life member of AMVET Post 57. Mr. McCloskey also involved himself in local politics by serving as a Democratic Committeeperson for nearly 30 years.